

Under a previous order, beginning at 4:30 p.m. today, the Senate will begin 1 hour of debate prior to the vote on invoking cloture on the FAA reauthorization bill. It is hoped that cloture will be invoked and that the Senate can complete its work on the conference report today. Again, that vote is expected around 5:30 this afternoon.

Also later today, the Senate will conduct a 1-hour debate on the issue of jobs and the economy. There will be two Members from each side of the aisle engaged in that debate, and all Senators are encouraged to be present for the discussion.

As a reminder, two cloture motions were filed with respect to the nomination of Thomas Dorr to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development. Those cloture votes will occur tomorrow morning, and Senators will be notified of the exact timing of those votes.

Finally, on behalf of the majority leader, I remind everyone this is expected to be a busy workweek in the Senate. There are a number of important conferences that have been completed and others that will be finished shortly. These legislative matters will be scheduled as soon as they are available so the Senate may adjourn at the earliest possible time. All Senators should adjust their schedules for a busy session as we approach what will very likely be the final week of this session.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting minority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, through the Chair to the distinguished majority whip, is there some estimate as to when we would get to the conference reports on Energy and Medicare?

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Nevada, it is a little bit difficult to ascertain exactly when, but we hope the Energy bill might be ready by Wednesday. We are going to work as hard as we can to get those measures ready for consideration in the Senate certainly this week. Hopefully, we can get to Energy by Wednesday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I hate to broach the subject because last time it didn't work out as well as I had contemplated, but I hope if something comes up that we can't finish our work on Friday, we will go over into the weekend because everyone believes they would rather work—I don't know about everyone—most people believe they would rather work this weekend knowing we don't have to come back until after the first of the year. I hope the leadership on the other side will keep that in mind and alert Senators that we may have to work Saturday and maybe even Sunday to get out of here for the Thanksgiving holiday and the year generally.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Nevada, I think that is a widely held sentiment on this side of the aisle as well. It will be vastly more desirable to wrap it up this week, even if this week means a longer week than normal, than to carry it over to next week or certainly December. We are going to be pushing to complete the business of the Senate this week. This week ideally would be Friday, but it could end up being Saturday or later. It is our goal to wrap up this session of the 108th Congress this week.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COCHRAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 1:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, like every loyal Red Sox fan, I believe that next season my team will be victorious. I bring this same level of optimism to my efforts to reduce the amount of wasted resources and litter caused by discarded beverage containers.

I rise today to speak again to the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003, the bottle bill, convinced that this is our year.

I have long been an advocate for increased recycling. Vermont passed its bottle bill in 1972 when I was state attorney general. In 1975, during my first session as a Representative in the U.S. House, I introduced a national bottle bill, closely resembling Vermont's very successful example. Last Congress, as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I convened the first Congressional hearing in many years on recycling, in which the committee heard expert testimony on the merits of a national program to recycle beverage containers.

The reason that I continue to push this issue is simple—it makes sense. Beverage container recycling is one of the simplest ways to see a dramatic improvement in our environment. As this chart shows, 120 billion—let me repeat, 120 billion with a “b”—beverage containers were wasted by not being recycled in 2001.

If we could raise the Nation's recycling rate to 80 percent, we would save the equivalent of 300 million barrels of oil over the next 10 years and eliminate 4 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually. States that have en-

acted bottle bills also have benefited by reducing road side litter by up to 84 percent.

These savings may sound unrealistic. But in Vermont alone, recycling efforts in 2001 reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 94,000 metric tons of carbon equivalent. That's equal to approximately two-thirds of all industrial carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion in Vermont and 4.5 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. To me, those savings sound remarkable.

Why a refundable deposit program? Thirty years of experience demonstrates that refundable deposit bottle bills are dramatically more effective than voluntary efforts. As this chart illustrates, the ten States that have implemented deposit laws recycle more containers than all of the other 40 States combined.

While I applaud curbside and other voluntary recycling efforts, the 71 percent of Americans who live in non-bottle bill States account for only 28 percent of recycled beverage containers. My bill, the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003, strikes a balance between the wishes of industry, the authority of individual States, and the needs of a healthy environment.

Unlike traditional bottle bills, this legislation would fully harness market incentives by setting an 80 percent recovery performance standard and allowing industry the freedom to design the most efficient deposit-return program to reach the standard. States that already have bottle bills will retain their authority to continue their programs in their own individual ways as long as they meet the national performance standard.

This past Saturday, November 15, 2003, was America Recycles Day in Vermont and across the country. Two years ago, to help commemorate the 2001 America Recycles Day, I participated in a public service announcement to raise awareness regarding the need to buy recycled goods.

The importance of recycling deserves, however, more than a 30-second public service announcement and more than its own day on the calendar. For it to work, recycling must be a commitment of all of ours each and every day of the year.

Vermont's commitment to recycling has provided some impressive statistics. For example, in 2001, 31 percent of Vermont's municipal waste was diverted from landfills. That year, 13,260 tons of containers were recycled through soft drink and beer distributors and materials recovery facilities.

The benefit of these programs is, of course, that they help keep our Green Mountains green.

I commend and thank Governor Jim Douglas for his many recent initiatives to encourage and improve the efficiency of recycling across Vermont. For example, under Governor Douglas' leadership, Vermont has implemented beverage container recycling programs at 20 State information centers.